

## IMPROVED ROTARY SHOOTING TARGET

### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

**[0001]** The present invention relates generally to shooting targets for use with handguns, shotguns, and rifles, and more particularly, to a rotary shooting target that has a plurality of impact paddle-like plates which define continually moving targets in response to being struck by bullets during usage.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

**[0002]** Vertical rotary shooting targets are known which comprise a stand having a horizontal axle on which a hub is rotatably mounted from which support rods extend radially on diametrically opposed sides of the hub. Each radial support rod carries a target in the form of a paddle-like impact plate made of hardened steel fixed to a side thereof, with the impact plates being mounted on opposite lateral sides of the radial support rods. When a shooter sequentially hits the targets, the hub, support rods and impact plates rotate about the axis in a vertical plane, creating rapidly moving targets for rapid fire practice.

**[0003]** When a bullet hits the impact plate, a splash cone is created which can cause particles of handgun bullets to splash and deflect more than 20 yards and rifle bullets can deflect 75 yards and more. When the bullet strikes a vertical junction between the support rod and the impact plate affixed thereof, lateral and rearward splashback can occur which can strike shooters located downwardly along a firing line. Moreover, the splashback can strike and damage the hub, axle, and stand, which are not made of impact resistant hardened steel. Since the impact plate and hubs are welded to the connecting rod, which can create stress cracks in the joint area, the junction areas can be susceptible to failure after repeated impact, as is the case in rotating targets of such type which are used for rapid shooting practice.

## OBJECTS AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] It is an object of the present invention to provide a vertical rotary shooting target adapted for more effectively preventing harmful splashback of bullet fragments along a shooting line.

[0005] Another object is to provide a vertical rotary shooting target as characterized above which minimizes splashback of bullet fragments which can damage the stand and support structure in the rotary target.

[0006] A further object is to provide a vertical rotary target of the foregoing type which provides more challenging rapid fire practice in sequential shooting.

[0007] Still another object is to provide a vertical rotary shooting target of the above kind which is adapted for more economical construction and long-term reliable usage. A related object is to provide such a rotary target which eliminates the necessity for welding structural components of the rotary targets at locations where stress cracks can occur that are susceptible to failure during usage of the target.

[0008] Other objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent upon reading the following detailed description and upon reference to the drawing, in which:

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] FIGURE 1 is a perspective of an illustrative rotary target in accordance with the invention being used on a shooting line.

[0010] FIG. 2 is an enlarged front elevational view of the rotary target shown in FIG. 1;

[0011] FIG. 3 is a vertical section of the illustrated rotary target taken in the plane of line 3-3 in FIG. 2;

**[0012]** FIG. 4 is an enlarged fragmentary section showing the connection of impact paddle support rods to a rotary hub of the device;

**[0013]** FIG. 5 is a front elevational view of an alternative embodiment of rotary target in accordance with the invention; and

**[0014]** FIG. 6 and FIG. 7 are enlarged fragmentary sections of the rotary target shown in FIG. 5, taken in the planes of lines 6-6 and 7-7 respectively.

**[0015]** While the invention is susceptible of various modifications and alternative constructions, certain illustrated embodiments thereof have been shown in the drawings and will be described below in detail. It should be understood, however, that there is no intention to limit the invention to the specific forms disclosed, but on the contrary, the intention is to cover all modifications, alternative constructions and equivalents falling within the spirit and scope of the invention.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

**[0016]** Referring now more particularly to Figures 1-4 of the drawings, there is shown an illustrative vertical rotary target 10 embodying the present invention, comprising a conventional stand 11 and a rotary target support structure 12. The stand 11 in this instance comprises a pair of side legs 14 which support a horizontal axle rod 15. The legs 14 have respective collars 16 at their upper ends through which opposing ends of the axle rod 15 extend, with removable split pins 18 retaining the axle rod 15 in mounted position.

**[0017]** The rotary target support structure 12 comprises a hub 20 rotatably mounted centrally on the axle rod 15, and a pair of target support members in the form of rods 21 extending radially from diametrically opposed sides of the hub 20. The target support rods 21 in this instance are welded in a butting relation to opposite sides of the hub 20 and further retained by means of a pair of reinforcement support rods 22 each welded to respective ends of the support rods 21 on opposite sides of the hub. The hub 20 is maintained centrally on the axle rod 15 by pins 24, and an appropriate bushing may be provided between the hub 20 and axle rod 15 facilitating relative rotational movement of the

hub 20. Hence, it can be seen that the target support structure 12 can be rotated relative to the axle rod 15.

**[0018]** In accordance with the invention, the target support members each include a laterally extending horizontal section which supports a target in the form of an impact plate in a manner which prevents and/or substantially minimizes harmful bullet splashback that can harm persons on the shooting line or damage to the structure of the rotary target. To this end, in the illustrated embodiment, each target support rod 21 includes a radial section 21a connected to the hub 20, a horizontal target supporting section 21b, and an angled section 21c interconnecting the radial and horizontal sections 21a, 21b. Each target is in the form of a rectangular or square impact plate 30 made of hardened, impact resistant steel capable of withstanding impact from rifle and handgun bullets. The impact plates 30 in this case are welded to outer radial sides of the horizontal support rod sections 21b. Hence, as depicted in FIG. 2, when an impact plate 30 is in an upper position and it is on an upper side of the horizontal support rod section 21b and when the impact plate 30 in the lower position it is on an underside of the horizontal support rod section 21b.

**[0019]** It will be seen that when an impact plate 30 is in an upper position and a bullet strikes the impact plate at the juncture between the impact plate 30 and the horizontal support rod section 21b fragments will tend to be deflected by the support rod section 21 in a substantial vertical direction, in contrast to the prior art in which vertical support rods that support the impact plates deflect bullet splashback laterally in a direction that could affect other shooters on the firing line. The horizontal support rod section 21b, when in such upper position, further tends to prevent deflection of the splashback in a downward direction that can damage the stand 11 or the rotary target support structure 12. Likewise, when the impact plate 30 is in a lower position, as depicted in FIG. 2, bullet fragments striking the impact plate 30 at the junction between the impact plate 30 and the horizontal support rod section 21b will be deflected downwardly toward the ground, again in a manner which will not cause harmful splashback to participants on the firing line or damage to the structure of the rotary target.

**[0020]** In carrying out a further feature of the invention, the target impact plates 30 are supported by the horizontal support rod sections 21b in outward laterally spaced relation to

the plane of the radial support rod sections 21a for increased horizontal separation between the impact plates 30 and enhanced shooting practice difficulty. In the illustrated embodiment, the impact plates 30 are disposed a distance "x" laterally outwardly of the radial support rod section 21a of about one-half the width "w" of the impact plate 30, hence creating a lateral separation corresponding to about the horizontal width "w" of the impact plates 30. It will be seen that rotary target provides more challenging sequential shooting by virtue of the increased horizontal spacing between the impact plates 30 during repetitive alternate shooting.

[0021] Referring now to Figures 5-7, there is shown an alternative embodiment of rotary shooting target in accordance with the invention, wherein items similar to those described above have been given similar reference numbers with the distinguishing "prime" added. The rotary target 10' includes a stand 11' similar to that described above and a rotary target support structure 12' which is adapted for more economical manufacture and even more effective prevention of undesirable bullet splashback. The rotary target support structure 12' again include a hub 20' supported on an axle rod 15' of the stand for relative rotational movement in a vertical plane.

[0022] In keeping with this embodiment of the invention, the rotary target includes target impact plate and support structures connected to the rotary hub 20' defined by unitary plates 35 of hardened impact resistant steel. Each plate 35 defines both a generally rectangular impact plate 30' and a support member 21' for supporting the impact plates 30' radially outwardly of the hub 20' in laterally spaced relation to a central radial axis by a distance by at least one-half the width of the impact plates. The support members 21' in this case include a radial plate section 21a' coupled to the hub 20' and an inclined plate section 21c' interconnecting the radial plate section 21a' and the impact plate 30'. The radial plate section 21a' of the lower plate depicted in FIG. 5 again is longer than the radial plate section of the upper plate for assuring a neutral vertical position of the target when not in use.

[0023] For affixing the target defining plates 35 to the rotary hub 20', tubular members 38 are welded on sides of the hub 20a. The radial plate sections 21a' of the target defining plates 35 each are positionable along opposite sides of the tubular members 38 and are secured together and to the channels by removable fasteners in the form of bolts 39.

**[0024]** It will be appreciated by one skilled in the art that since the impact plates 30' and support members 21' are defined by respective unitary, coplanar plates 35, there are no joints, such as the juncture between impact plates and cylindrical support rods, that can increase potentially harmful splashback deflection to persons on the firing line. Since none of the structural members of the rotary support structure 12' necessitate welding, there also are no stress cracks or other weld created defects that can affect the structural integrity of the rotary target at locations that are the subject of repetitive shooting impact. Moreover, since the target defining plates 35 can be easily bolted to the rotary hub 20', the rotary target lends itself to easy manufacture and field assembly.